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Futuristic threats envisioned during technology game

by Larine Barr, AFRL Public Affairs

McLEAN, Va.— Warfighters, leading scientists and engineers from across the United States met Feb.11-13 in McLean, Va., to contemplate what the battlefield will be like in 25 years.

The futurists gathered to take part in the Air Force Technology Seminar Game (TSG II), sponsored by the Air Force Research Laboratory, to envision a range of threatening environments and answer questions about what it will take to win a war in 2027. The McLean, Va., event was the second of four TSG II seminars, which will unfold over a six-month period, ending in May.

"We encourage Star Wars-like thinking of our participants — to go beyond today's traditional warfare environment and delve into tomorrow's unforeseen threats so that the Air Force can better predict and prepare warfighters for the future," said organizer Debra Haley, Associate Director For Investment And Strategy, AFRL Plans and Programs Directorate.

By executing TSG II, AFRL — and the Air Force — are the vanguard of the future. "This knowledge will increase our foresight and better enable the investment planning for tomorrow's scientific and technological programs," she said.

During the second seminar, participants focused on future capabilities the Air Force needs to conduct operations in the environment predicted by participants at the first seminar. Operators, technologists, and others explored potential challenges that would result from this new environment.

"For the second seminar, our primary focus was on the operations community," said Bob Deasy of Booz Allen Hamilton, on contract to support TSG II. "Essentially we are trying to merge operators and developers to try and determine the capabilities required in the year 2027, and these capabilities will help us get back to the science and technology community to come up with possible solutions."

The first seminar, held in Dayton in January, explored future trends in areas such as geo-political, environmental, socioeconomic, regional, commercial and technological trends. The seminar also addressed trends in biotechnology, nanotechnology, information technology, directed energy, robotic and energetic technology.

During the third TSG II, scheduled for March 18-20, scientists and engineers from DOD, industry and academia will discuss technologies needed to address future capabilities that emerged at the first two seminars.

The April 15-17 session will shift and futurists will evaluate the proposed technologies as applied in the predicted environment of 2027. Here the participants will assess the additional capability created by using the technologies in future scenarios.

Results will culminate and be announced during a special technology symposium in May when AFRL plays host to operations, science and technology, and acquisition Air Force communities. According to Haley, the intent is to help influence Air Force long range planning and S&T investment strategy.

"TSG II benefits derive from uniting the warfighter and the scientist on common ground. There they will identify and understand future requirements and the solution set enabled by science and technology resulting in our nation's future capabilities and defense," said Haley.